2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

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THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The poor woman was in great distress, and begged me to intercede for her. I spoke to the man about it, but the *feddān* of land proved to be too much of a temptation to him, and he accordingly obtained his divorce.[1] For some time after this he was ashamed to meet me, and always got out of my way when he knew I was coming to the village. However, his divorced wife was lucky enough to get another husband fairly quickly, and, moreover, one who was in an even better position than her former partner, whom dire vengeance has overtaken in the person of his new wife (Fig. 15). This woman is inordinately jealous, and if her wretched husband is a few minutes later in returning home from his work than she thinks he ought to be she flies into a passion and imagines that he has gone to see his former wife, or, rather, "to look upon her," as she puts it. For this reason she has, on more than one occasion, left his house and gone to her brother's, where she has remained for two or three days before her husband could by any means persuade her to return to him.

FIG. 15. HUSBAND AND JEALOUS WIFE

One day when I was visiting this man's village I was informed that his wife had again left him and remained in her brother's house for six days, because the man had gone to sell some of his *dura* (maize) to a customer living in the street in which his divorced wife now resides with her new husband. The jealous woman had returned to her husband's house only the evening before my visit! Her brother had warmly espoused her cause and told his sister's husband that in future he was not so much as to cast a look in the direction of his former wife!

[1] I think he obtained his divorce on the ground of her childlessness—see Chapter VI.

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obtains for his business, probably refrained from examining the statement as to age made by the girl's parents.

The childbearing age lasts over a long period, for girls mature early, and it is a common thing in Egypt for a woman of fifty to give birth to a child. From an economic point of view it is probably an advantage that so many of the children die, for otherwise the country would soon become over-populated. What is so desirable is that those who do survive should be brought up in healthier surroundings, both moral and physical, and without the unnecessary suffering inflicted upon them by the ignorance of the mothers.

FIG. 17. YOUNG GIRL DRESSED UP TO ATTRACT A HUSBAND

In spite of the frequently indecent talk on sexual matters, there is a strict moral code, especially with regard to unmarried girls, the infringement of which often entails a terrible punishment. This seems somewhat unfair on the girls, considering the atmosphere in which they are brought up. If a girl has misconducted herself before marriage, and is discovered at marriage to be unchaste, the disgrace to her family is looked upon as such a terrible one that her own parents will often kill her, sometimes taking the unfortunate child—for she is hardly more than a child—into the desert, and there dispatching her, usually, I

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

765 301 When a woman's husband dies one of the first things she does is to take off all her jewellery—nose-ring, earrings, finger-rings, gold, silver, or brass bracelets—wearing instead a necklace of dark blue or black beads (Fig. 19) and sometimes blue or black earrings and bracelets. The nose-ring is discarded for good, unless she marries again.

682 765 301 Knowledge of this custom is sometimes very useful. I was calling on a certain Captain of Police one day and happened to arrive at the moment when he was investigating a case of murder. An old man had been waylaid not far from his village and killed, but all his fellow-villagers declared that they knew nothing whatever about it. The wife, a son by a former marriage, and some other relations had been locked up pending investigations. The wife, very negroid in type, as, indeed, were many of the people of her village, was, together with her stepson, undergoing examination when I arrived. The officer strongly suspected that the wife was implicated, and possibly the stepson also. The woman was much younger than her husband, who was, for a *fellāḥ*, a man of some substance. I watched the woman carefully while she was being questioned, and she certainly was far from prepossessing in appearance. On looking more closely I noticed that she was still wearing all her ornaments of gold and other materials, including her nose-ring. If she had really cared anything about her unfortunate husband she would have removed them immediately upon hearing that he was dead. I asked my friend the Captain of Police if he had noticed this, and then pointed out to him how many ornaments she was still wearing. He was delighted with this piece of evidence, which had quite escaped his notice, and which certainly went to confirm his suspicion. This incident shows that a knowledge of personal adornment, and of the customs associated with certain ornaments, may be quite useful to officials who are concerned with criminal investigation among the *fellāḥīn*.

● [42]

304 554 789 Among the *fellāḥīn* it is usually the custom to pierce one ear of a young boy if he is an only son, and in this ear he wears a decorative ring (Fig. 20). When he gets older he discards the ring, but the perforation is always visible. No reason was given for this custom, but I suspect it is most likely a method of protection against the evil eye, and is possibly regarded as a means of disguising his sex.

∞ Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular

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PERSONAL DECORATION AND ORNAMENTS

Tattooing is another form of personal decoration. It is popular with both sexes among the peasants, and it may be resorted to for utilitarian as well as for decorative purposes. The operation of tattooing is a very painful one, and is performed by specialists in the art. Sometimes a woman tattoos women and girls, and a man men and boys, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this (see Fig. 25). The street cry of the tattooer is "*Yā ṣabī ta'āla dukk!*" ("O lad, come and be tattooed!"). A woman who desires to be tattooed will, on hearing a female tattooer utter her street cry, call out, "Come here, O damsel who tattoos!"

FIG. 20. CHILD (AN ONLY SON) WEARING SPECIAL EARRING—FOR WHICH SEE INSET

The implement used in tattooing consists of seven needles fixed into a short stick, which is bound round at the end and then plastered over to keep the needles firmly in position. Sometimes smaller needles, and only five in number, are used for tattooing children. Lamp-black is the pigment employed, and this is usually mixed with oil, though some people say that water is used. However, when I last witnessed the operation of tattooing oil was mixed with the lamp-black.

A tattooer often attends the village market, where he can be seen plying his trade. Samples of the various designs, which are very numerous, are often framed and propped up against the tree

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ledge this woman is of an exceedingly jealous disposition, which no doubt accounts for that particular trait being exhibited in her *ukht*! Her husband is a decent man, but I have had no opportunity of judging as to whether he is jealous or not. However, one must presume that he is so, in view of the fact that his *ukht* appears to possess this quality in so marked a degree!

As will be seen below on p. 186, some of the subterranean beings also have each an *ukht*.

FIG. 34. CHILD WEARING FROCK AND HOOD OF SACKING

A woman remains unclean for forty days after giving birth to a boy and for thirty days if the child is a girl. I have also been informed that the husband must not enter the room occupied by his wife for seven days after the birth, and that if he wishes to speak to her he must do so from a distance. I am not sure if this is always the rule, but it is so among some of the *fellāḥīn*.

A child is not washed at all until the seventh day after birth, and then the face, hands, and feet only are washed. When I endeavoured to make the women understand how unhealthy this was they declared that they were afraid to wash a child until it was seven days old, and then only to the limited extent just mentioned, for fear of its catching cold. On one occasion a child was brought to me in a most filthy state, and covered from head to foot with suppurating sores. I told the mother that I would not give her any medicine until she had washed the child. On hearing this she became terribly distressed, and declared that she could not wash it. I remained firm, however, in my refusal to give her anything until she had made the child cleaner. It transpired that the child's father had had spots on his body when he was younger,

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BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

When it is desired that the tufts shall be shaved off quite an important ceremony takes place—at least, according to my informant, in Asyūṭ Province. When possible the child is taken to the tomb or tombs of the sheikh or sheikhs to whom the tufts of hair are dedicated, and the tufts are removed just within, or just outside, the sacred building (Fig. 39), or the child may be taken to a mosque, where the ceremony can also be performed. If the child is a Copt it is taken to the church or churches named after the saint or saints to whom these tufts of hair have been dedicated. In the case of the Muslims the village barber is called in to remove the hair, but with the Copts a priest performs the rite. The removal of these tufts takes place if possible when the hair is four to five centimetres long, but in parts of Upper Egypt the ceremony is so expensive for a poor *fellāh* that the child may have to wait some time longer before the tufts can be removed. Bread and meat are taken to the tombs or mosques where the ceremony is to be performed, and then a feast is held to the accompaniment of dancing, beating of the drum (*darābukkeh*), hand-clapping, and *zaghārīṭ*.[1] The barber on these occasions may demand quite a large sum of money, and altogether the ceremony rarely costs less than six pounds, often more.

FIG. 39. CHILD ABOUT TO HAVE ITS TUFTS OF HAIR CUT OFF AT THE TOMB OF THE SHEIKH UMBĀRAK

The man on the right is the barber.

[1] The shrill cries of joy uttered by women on all festive occasions.

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inclined to pay the bride-price, partly because the girl had been married before, but chiefly, I think, because he did not want to part with the money. The love-stricken young man, who had already got his portion of his father's house allotted to him in view of his marriage later on, would often enter these apartments to clean and tidy them, meditating the while on the girl whom he so desired.

The effect of this device on a man is, I am told, always the same; and even if he is already betrothed to another girl he will break off his engagement.

In Egypt betrothal is almost, if not quite, as binding as marriage, and the people speak of the dissolving of such a tie as a divorce. A man who has been affected in the way described above will, if he is betrothed, pay a large sum of money to get rid of the girl whom he was originally to have married. I was told that the man is quite unaware that a charm has been used to catch him. He just gets mad about the girl without any knowledge that such a trap has been set for him.

FIG. 41. THE YOUNG MAN WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF A LOVE-CHARM

On the other occasion the mother and brothers of a young unmarried girl were very anxious that she should secure a husband, but hitherto none had been forthcoming. One of my servants, a young man of twenty-two, had been seen several times by the various members of this family and by the girl herself. He is rather a nice-looking young man, and, moreover, has a certain amount of land and a good house. The eldest brother of the girl had been to my servant's village and visited his home, and had seen that his family was very superior to most of the other villagers. One day when my servant was walking through the garden of the house which had been lent to me by the Government he noticed

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MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

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common to all classes in Egypt, but now survives only among the *fellāḥin*.

Among the Copts divorce is never permitted, but among the Muslims it is not a difficult matter to arrange, though it is necessary for a man or woman to produce some valid reason for taking this course of action. The parties, or perhaps the husband or the wife only, go before the *ḳāḍi* and say that they wish to be divorced. A sum of money is sometimes paid to the other party by the one who applies for the divorce. A man is permitted to divorce his wife if she is childless; that is to say, if he wishes to get rid of her. If after such a separation the parties wish to marry again they can do so. The 'triple divorce' is a much more serious affair, as will be seen in the following story.

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[241]
[142]
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FIG. 42. THE OLD MAN WHO DIVORCED HIS WIFE

An old man whom I have known for several years (Fig. 42) came to me in great distress when I arrived in his village. He is eighty years of age or more, and owns most, if not all, the looms in the place. I thought he seemed very bent, and he hobbled along with the aid of a stick, followed by a grinning crowd of villagers. He fell down at my feet and began to kiss my boots, and appeared to be beside himself with grief. It appeared that shortly before my arrival he had got into a temper with his wife (Fig. 43), who is considerably younger than he is, and in a fit of rage had divorced her by the triple divorce. This divorce is obtained by a man saying to his wife " I divorce you " three times over, in the presence of witnesses. Once this is done he cannot remarry his wife, however much he may wish to do so, unless she first marries another man,

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Sometimes if a woman has no children her friends will take her
842 152 to the railway and make her lie down between the lines in order that the train may pass over her. One reason given me for this somewhat dangerous procedure is that the fear which the woman [827] experiences assists conception, for it is said to cause the blood to circulate quickly through the body, making the womb expand, with the result that she will more easily conceive. Another ex-

[291] [192]

FIG. 45. FERTILITY RITE: LIGHTING THE 'CANDLE'

[776] [774] planation given me for this rite was that when the mother is thus frightened her *ḳarīneh* comes to her with the soul of one of her dead children and causes it to re-enter its mother's body. The soul of a dead child, so I have been told, goes to its mother's *ḳarīneh*. Probably these explanations are accepted by some of the people, but in many cases, I fancy, such rites are merely carried out because they are customary and recognized cures for childlessness.

764 842 The water with which a corpse is washed before burial is, if possible, obtained from a mosque or from a sheikh's sacred well. After the washing is completed, a barren woman will seize the opportunity to step over this water seven times. I was told of one who resorted to this device and who became pregnant a month afterward.

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incision. The disk cut in this way is removed, whereupon the woman inserts her hand inside the pot to smooth away the interior ridges formed by the joining of the two hemispheres. A rim is then added round the opening, and small handles are fixed to the sides (Fig. 62). The pots are left to harden in the sun before being fired in the kiln. No slip or glaze is used for decoration.

I found the same technique employed in another village in the same province, the site chosen for the factory being also a palm-grove. Here men as well as women were making the hand-made pots. This is somewhat unusual, as in most parts of the world the men confine themselves to pottery-making with the wheel.

FIG. 61. CUTTING THE OPENING WITH THE THUMBNAIL

In both these villages men were making pots with wheels on the same site as that occupied by the women, but at a short distance from them.

The clay used for the wheel-turned pots is the same as that used for the hand-made. The circular table on which the clay is placed is rotated by means of a flywheel worked by the potter's foot (*cf.* Fig. 72). When large vessels, such as *ziyār* (singular *zīr*),[1] are to be made the man first moistens the circular table with water,

[1] Very large jars, in which the household water is stored.

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323 415 sprinkles on it a certain quantity of chaff, and then puts a large lump of clay on it to form a strong base for the pot. When smaller vessels are to be made the process is different, as will be seen later. He then takes some more clay and forms it into a thick, flat sausage, 323 which he coils round the lump of clay forming the base (Fig. 63). As he rotates the wheel the pot begins to take form, the potter drawing up the clay as he works to make the sides. Having completed the work so far, he takes another lump of clay and presses it on to the base to strengthen it still further in this part. To increase the size of the vessel more coils of clay are superimposed round the pot, one at a time, the man pouring a little water from his hand over each added roll to effect a join. This is repeated until half the intended height of the vessel is attained, when cords are coiled round it spirally with the aid of the wheel (*cf.* Fig. 77). This half-pot is now removed from the wheel and placed on the ground, where it is left to dry for several hours. When sufficiently hardened it is again placed on the wheel, and the upper part completed by superimposing thick sausages of clay as before, the shape of the vessel being obtained by decreasing the length of each additional roll of clay. The *zīr*, having been finished off with a

FIG. 62. PUTTING ON THE HANDLES OF A POT

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drew up the clay all round, thus forming a shallow bowl with thick sides.

Her share of the work was now completed, and she handed the

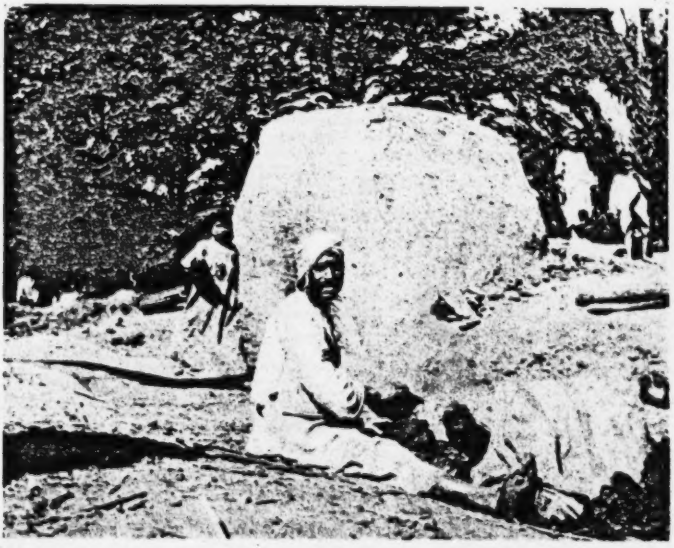

FIG. 65. MAN PREPARING AND KNEADING THE CLAY: KILN IN THE BACKGROUND

pot on to a man, who thinned the sides by drawing the superfluous clay upward. This he did by holding the palm of one hand flat against the interior surface, while he beat the exterior side with a curved piece of wood[1] held in the other hand (Figs. 66 and 67). He continued this process until he had formed a large but rimless jar.

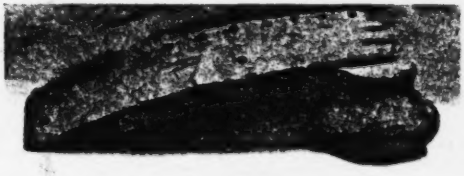

FIG. 66. TWO IMPLEMENTS USED BY POTTERS

The man now handed the jar on to another man, who placed a thick coil of clay round the opening, and, turning it on the wheel, formed it into a rim (Fig. 68). He finally added one or two small

[1] This piece of wood is a portion of the rim of an old sieve used for winnowing.

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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

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of clay is placed upright, and gradually hollowed out and moulded into shape. Long experience enables the potter to know the exact amount of clay required for making a pan, so that there is no necessity to add more. The pillar of clay is rapidly hollowed out and drawn outward and upward into the required shape, and it should be noted that the rim is not added, but is in one piece with the rest of the pan. The base, however, is strengthened by the

FIG. 77. BINDING CORD ROUND THE PAN

addition of another lump of clay smoothed over by the hand, and the outside and inside of the pan are finished off by smoothing with a potsherd. Cord is then bound round the pan spirally, as the vessel revolves on the wheel (Fig. 77). Care is taken that the cord should encircle the outer edge of the pan just below the rim. The vessel is now dried in a shady place for two days, and in the sun for one day, after which the cord is removed (Fig. 78). Before being placed in the oven, however, the superfluous clay is scraped off the base with the *garūt*. The fire is constantly kept going with the usual fuel of *būṣ* for two hours, after which time the furnace is closed and the fire left to burn itself out. When the vessels are cold they are removed from the oven.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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clearing away of rubbish, for removing *sibākh* (the earth obtained from ancient rubbish mounds, used as a fertilizer), and for the transport of grain ; in it, moreover, a woman generally places the dry roots which she collects in the fields to bear home for fuel, and also the goods which she conveys to and from the market. A woman always carries this basket on her head (see p. 80, Fig. 38),

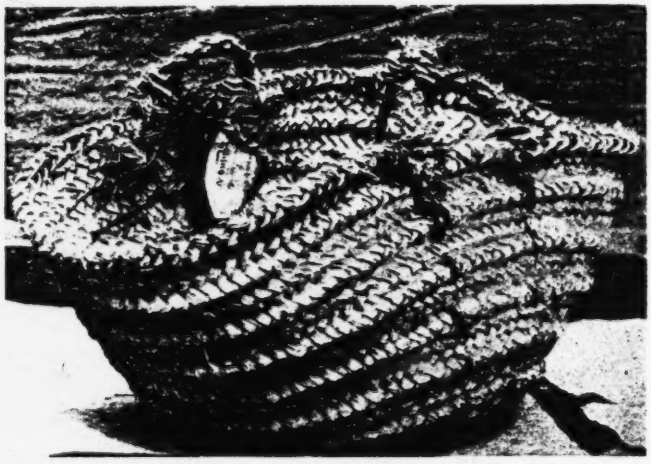

FIG. 83. A MAḲṬAF

the varied contents sometimes including even a small child (see p. 37, Fig. 14).

The habit of carrying their burdens on their heads gives the women their wonderful poise. The heaviest loads are thus carried with apparently the greatest ease. For example, the large water-jars, filled to the brim, are conveyed home in this way by the women without any support from their hands, and without a drop of the contents being spilled (see p. 41, Fig. 16).

Children begin to carry burdens in this way at a very early age, smaller jars, and perhaps somewhat smaller baskets, being used by them. If the heads of the female Egyptian peasants were systematically measured it might be shown that this method of carrying heavy weights from early childhood has made a definite impression on the shape of the skulls, those of the women being possibly much flatter on the top than those of the men. I do not

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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know if any physical anthropologist has discovered this peculiarity in the head-form of Egyptian women or not.

The *maḳṭaf* is made, as I have said, of palm-leaves. These are torn off the main stem and split into the desired width, and are then woven into a very long plait. Extra leaves are constantly incorporated, till the necessary length is completed. Any very narrow

FIG. 84. SEWING THE PLAIT INTO A SPIRAL

strands left over as useless for this purpose are carefully put on one side, to be utilized in the following manner. When the plait is completed the basket-maker takes these strands and forms them into a cord by twisting them together between the palms of his hands. He then takes a large iron needle, which he threads with this cord, and proceeds to form the basket by sewing the plait into a spiral. The cord is inserted through the plait in such a way that it forms a thick spiral rib round the basket (Figs. 84 and 86). The work is often so cleverly done that, unless one has witnessed the whole process, it is exceedingly difficult to discover how the basket has been made. Two rope handles are attached to each basket (Fig. 83), the rim of which is often strengthened with the

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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confined to a few localities, where such work is done by specialists.

The looms are usually set up indoors, but, though hand-worked, they cannot be said to be very simple or primitive, and I feel that I must devote a great deal more study to the methods of working them before describing them in detail.[1]

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FIG. 91. YOUTH MAKING ROPE

Very small looms are used for weaving narrow bands or for adding borders to silk handkerchiefs (Fig. 92).

Looms such as are used by the Arab women for the weaving of carpets are of a more primitive type. They consist of four pegs driven into the ground, on which the warp is extended, and two stones on which the heddle is balanced (Fig. 93). An excellent description of such a loom has been given by Mrs Crowfoot in *Sudan Notes and Records*.[2] The carpets and rugs woven on these simple looms are very strong and durable, and the colouring is quite attractive.

Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done

[1] For an excellent photograph and description of a modern upright loom see A. C. Mace, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 75 f. and Pl. 2.

[2] April, 1921, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 25 ff.; see also H. E. Winlock, *Ancient Egypt* (1922), pp. 71 ff.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Spinning is, so far as I have yet observed, more often done by men than by women in Egyptian villages, though I have seen one or two women engaged in this occupation. One year, when visiting a tribe of Arabs, I saw more than one woman spinning yarn.

I have referred in previous chapters to two kinds of bread made by the peasant women. Wheat- and *dura*-flour blended, or the latter ingredient only, are used, mixed of course with yeast, and

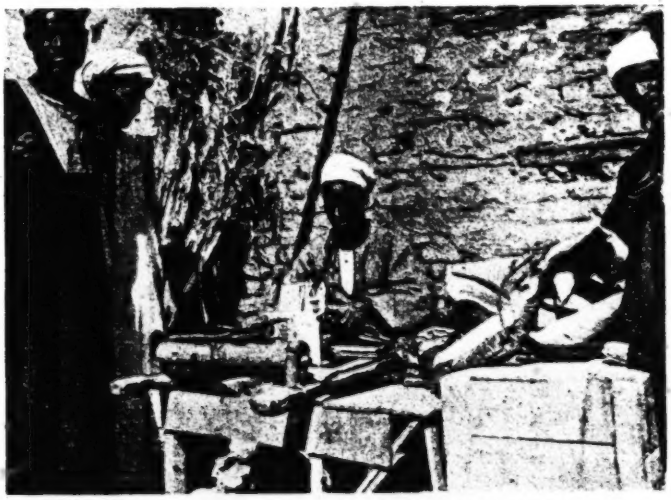

FIG. 92. SMALL LOOM FOR ADDING BORDERS TO SILK OR COTTON HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE LIKE

water is added till the dough is of the right consistency. The dough is then put to rise in the sun.

When the round, bun-shaped loaves of bread, called *khubz*, are made the dough is formed into cakes of the required size, which are then put to rise in the sun before being baked in the oven (Fig. 94). Wheat-flour is the main ingredient of *khubz*, which is the bread usually eaten by the wealthier peasants.

The making of *battaw* is a more laborious task. When ready for the oven a small dab of fairly moist dough is placed on a large, fan-shaped object made of palm-ribs. The woman then tosses the dough on the fan until it has spread in a thin layer all over it. The 'fan' is then handed to another woman, seated before the mud oven, who slides the flat, round sheet of dough on to the open

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

The native bread has a good deal of *dura* mixed with the wheaten flour, but it is quite good to eat when fresh, and if you can choose your bakeress! It is certainly far more satisfying than the white bread eaten in England, and the fact that the most nourishing properties are not extracted from the flour may account for the beautiful teeth which are so noticeable among most Egyptians of all classes.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

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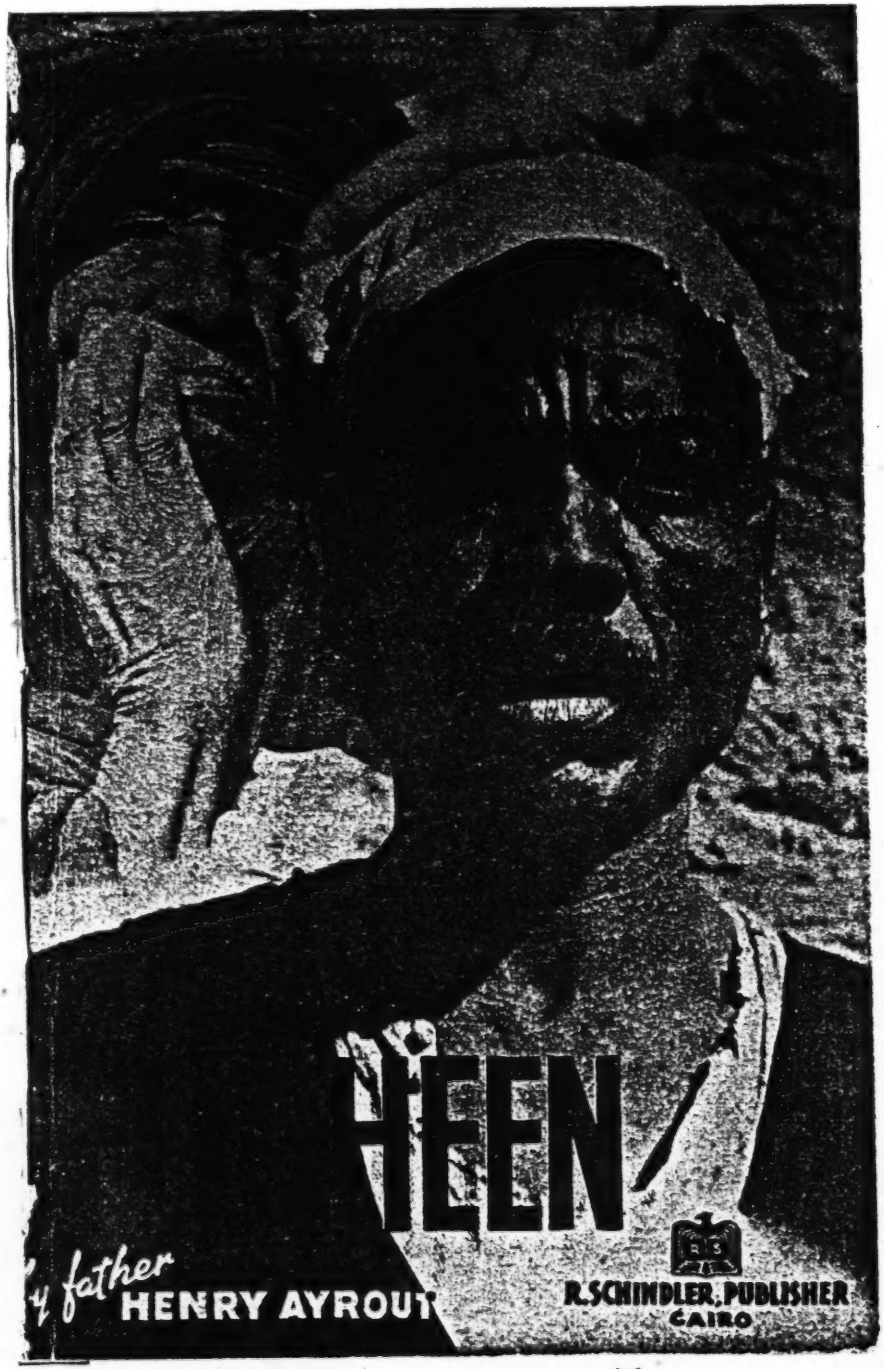

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3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

CHAPTER V

THE FELLAH AS A PERSON

We have seen that the fellah's work consists entirely of physical labour and brings his whole body into play. Let us now consider the labourer himself, and examine the fellah from the physical point of view, his race, type, clothing, habits and so on. We shall find once again that water, soil and sun are the physical agents which explain and often even determine the physical constitution of the fellah.

Despite this dependence on the material environment, the liberty of the human will introduces an element of variety. But the will in its turn is subject to another factor, conformity to tradition, and this in the end produces the same result — stability.

(1) *Race and Type*

To what race does the modern fellah belong, and what is his genealogy and origin? No final answer has as yet been found to these questions. Nevertheless, any amount research has been done on the subject, and any number of theories, serious or not, evolved to explain the facts.

To go back no further than the eighteenth century, Volney, for example, declares the fellaheen to be of negroid extraction. Vivant Denon suggests a Caucasian origin. Poinsinet de Sivry, following Pliny the Younger, believes them descended from the Celts. Winckelman suggests Chinese immigration as a solution, and Moreau de Jonnes would put the cradle of the Egyptian race as far away as Polynesia.

Ethnologists of the late nineteenth century, with more knowledge and plausibility, sought a key to the problem nearer Egypt, either in Africa or in Asia.

The theory of African origin is upheld by Hartmann, and later by Flinders Petrie and Maspero, who class the Egyptians with the Ethiopians. Chantre, after anthropo-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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Copts MR10

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144 type is dominant, and the other recessive. This absorption
174 of neighbouring and therefore not unnaturally somewhat
175 similar elements by a settled people of greater vigour and numbers seems a logical process. Had the invaders or immigrants arrived in millions, had they come from Germany or the Balkans, they might perhaps have imposed their own type, despite the influence of climate and way of living. But the deserts on East and West, the depth inland to the South, and the unusual character of the Nile Valley, as well as the density of the original population, have kept the country free from all mass immigrations.

Thus both geographical and historical factors have conspired to preserve the Egyptian type. The country population especially retains a facial appearance distinguishing it among the countless mixtures of the Near East.

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144 It has been said that the Copts are the purest repre-
779 sentatives of the ancient stock. This is true in the towns,
186 where the Copts are usually the original inhabitants, while the Moslems are for the most part descended from Arabs and Turks, and have married women from any and every country. Racial and physical differences are here very clear. In the country, however, this theory does not fit the facts. The fellaheen who have remained Christian and those who have become Moslems are of one and the same origin. If the former for religious reasons marry only with Christians and have thus kept the race pure, tradition has made the latter no less exclusive. The antipathy between fellaheen and Bedouin makes marriages between them extremely rare, and any union with a foreigner who may chance to live in the village is considered scandalous in the extreme.

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142 Thus it is possible, in describing the type, to generalise without appreciable error.

The fellah is a heavily built man, though not stout. His skull and face are broad, his forehead narrow, his eyes and hair dark. He has rather prominent cheekbones, a thick nose, full but not protruding lips, and a heavy jaw. His features on the whole are rugged but not ill-favoured, and are neither very sensitive nor very expressive. His thick wrists, ankles and neck distinguish him from the supple Bedouin. His back is rounded, his shoulders not so much sloping as bent in towards the chest, and his hips narrow.

He has rather large, flattish feet and his average height is about 5 ft. 6 ins. 142

The women are similar, but in proportion. They seem, however, to preserve the original type more purely. (**)

These are the features of a single race and of a single type. As with all living things, varieties are not wanting, but they are never wildly different from the norm. For example, the cranial index (about 75) is one point higher in Lower Egypt. There is a slight tendency to the Negroid type as Nubia is approached. Maqrizi and 'Abdel Latif had already noted this in the fourteenth century, and any traveller who gets as far as Aswan can see it for himself. The *Sa'idi*, or Upper Egyptian, who lives in a drier and hotter climate, is taller, more bronzed, and more vigorous and muscular than the fellah of the Delta. [141]

(2) *Care and Clothing of the Body*

The fellah is not a hairy type of man. He wears his hair cut short, except when in mourning for a male of his household; but he likes to wear a moustache as a sign of virility. In childhood his head is clean-shaven, apart from the ritual tuft. When he becomes old and venerable he lets his beard grow. 302 [888]

The women's hair is too much neglected to be plentiful. Their meagre locks are sometimes tied up with russet or black ribbons, but always hidden under the veil or gathered into a kerchief. [291]

Since the earliest times both sexes have removed the body hair with either a razor or a paste of sugar and alum. 302 304

Like all ancient peoples with a long tradition, the fellaheen mark their skin with designs ritual, aesthetic and hygienic, which have been handed down from time immemorial. Incision and all forms of coloration are intended not only for ornament, but also as charms and prophylactics.

Girls have the lobes of both ears pierced, and sometimes the side of one nostril. These perforations are kept open by a thread until the ear- or nose-ring is inserted. 304 463

All boys, Moslem as well as Coptic, are circumcised with great ceremony by the village barber.

(3) *Health and Sickness*

291 The fellah's clothes are no more of a barrier against the elements than his work. They cut him off from neither air nor sun, earth nor water. This absorption into his environment gives him abundance of physical life. His robust 142 and hardy constitution is in harmony with nature. For 513 sleep he needs no mattress, no comfort. He bears the most 151 brutal incisions without a cry. Colds, headaches and the foulest odours trouble him not at all. His appetite never fails, and his extremely sensitive hearing catches the slightest sound, human or other.

164 Very often, unfortunately, Nature turns treacherously upon him and infects his unsuspecting body with diseases which fatten and undermine him. These are endemic diseases which are rooted in the peasant class. Let us say nothing of tuberculosis or hereditary syphilis, which are the fellah's constant companions. Far more dangerous are bilharzia, ankylostomiasis (hookworm) and malaria, which in some *mudiriyas* affect more than 80% of the population. [515] These arise from lack of cleanliness, and too close a contact between man and the soil.

But the most noticeable are the eye-diseases. Though the greenness of the fields is restful to the sight, the heat and glare of the sun and still more the thick dust which no rain ever lays, the sandy wind from the hardby desert, the dung, the flies, and dirty fingers all combine from childhood to inflame and infect the eyes, if not to blind them. It is impossible to pass through a village without being struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people going about. According to statistics they amount to 60% of the population. In 1927 it was officially recorded that there were 266,550 one-eyed people and 110,000 completely blind. In 1937 the provinces of Minia and Assiut were credited with 50,000 either one-eyed or blind. In actual fact there are more than that. There is no counting the bleary or bloodshot looks, the eyes dimmed by glaucoma or trachoma.

Another scourge is *bilharzia* (41). This is a form of haematuria caused by a parasite which is absorbed into the system through the skin. The fellaheen make their ritual ablutions [515 daily, often side by side, in any sort of water, and work bare- 744] foot on the damp earth or in the mud of the drains. The larva of this parasite, which is peculiar to Egypt, grows

their villages and in their fields they provide subjects for the art of others, but remain unconscious of their own beauty. Yet their love of the soil, their sense of rhythm, and their taste for songs, stories and colours should make their artistic education easy. 181 183

They are more apt at figures, at repetition and at copying. The author has met fellaheen who can do very complicated arithmetical problems in their heads, and can put an accountant right where he has made a mistake, whether by accident or design. Others reproduce models they are given with the utmost faithfulness, and retain for a very long time the memory of a remark or a visit, or of an object they have been shown. But although their memory is excellent their understanding is slow. [803]

Yet in childhood they are quick to understand, as may be seen when they are in school or at play; but at about fifteen they begin to get dull. Up to this age the fellaheen are lively, and seem quicker than the people of the West.

Their early physical development and the effect of the climate might explain this. But what can explain the apathy that overcomes them afterwards, and keeps them, in spite of everything, a backward race? 181 182

Undernourishment has been suggested as a cause. But if this were responsible their physical development would also suffer. The adult fellah has a strong constitution. Some sociologists put it down to masturbation, which is fairly common in the Islamic East; but this vice seems limited to the cities, for country people are much less morbid. It has also been attributed to the unavoidable effect of climate, as a plant which grows too quickly stops growing at a certain point, and withers. But there are fellaheen who have left their villages and produced in the second generation good doctors, capable engineers, or at least officials and businessmen equal to those of other countries. [142 839]

It can only be his social environment which limits the intelligence of the young fellah, that is to say the crass ignorance which surrounds him from his first entry into the community, and the routine of a life which bows him down to the soil and condemns him to everlasting repetition. This is what arrests the development of his mind. Intelligence is developed by new gain and achievements, which are unknown in this too stable world of the Egyptian peasantry.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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When they are happy

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8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

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Photograph by the author.

محمود محمد العتر

Maḥmûd Mohammed el-'Itr
Watchman of the Administration of Antiquities in the Desert of Saqqāra.

8:Schaefer A -5 (1900-1901) 1904
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Upper Egypt

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Women Drawing Water.